

NOTE

How to break the Grand Alliance

Bharat Jhunjhunwala writes :

The roots of export of terror from Pakistan appear to lie in the Grand Feudal Alliance that the leaders of that country have cobbled up.

Generally speaking, economic reforms mean that businesses will compete with each other and bring prices down. Not so in Pakistan. Here economic reforms meant that the cartel of MNCs and local businessmen would be free to charge exorbitant prices and fleece the people. Breaking monopolies is an essential part of reforms. This was not done in Pakistan. In the result Pakistani society got split into two mutually hostile parts. The naked and jobless common man stood on one side. On the other side stood a Grand Feudal Alliance of Zamindars, Business Houses, Multinational Corporations, Pakistan Army and American Government. The common man held the Americans responsible for his hunger and nakedness because the Americans propped up rest of the players of the Alliance.

The jihadis gave voice to the pain of the common man. Two months before the Mumbai events, they blasted the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad. This hotel was the preferred destination for American investors. The Ambassador of Czechoslovakia was killed along with 53 others. Taking responsibility for the attack, the Fidayeen-e-Islam said it was aimed at kicking "American crusaders" out of the country. The jihadis got the desired results. Pakistan economy was derailed and government weakened, American investors fled. The jihadis have certainly weakened the Grand Feudal Alliance. But the Alliance was smug and happy. It played up these same jihadi activities to secure more financial help from the Americans.

The Pakistani Government does not want to eliminate the jihadis and also does not want to give them free play. The purpose of the Grand Alliance is secured by 'optimal' terror-enough to be invoked as a trump card before the Americans and small enough not to become a threat.

The jihadis wanted to repeat their successful experience with Marriott in making the Mumbai attacks. The two follow identical pattern of targeting hotels frequented by foreign investors. The Mumbai attacks do not appear to be orchestrated by the Pakistan Government which has faced similar music in the Marriott attack. It is a separate matter that Pakistan Government is not willing, or able to, contain the jihadis. But this should not surprise anybody because it was equally unable to control similar activities targeted within as in the Marriott incidence.

Government of India wants to put pressure upon the Pakistan Government to take action against the jihadis. Home Minister Chidambaram is reportedly flying into the Court of the United States with the dossier of proofs. This policy will not deliver. It fails to even recognize the main problem, let alone solve it. The main problem is exploitation of the common man by the landlords, coterie of business houses and foreign investors. Chidambaram seeks assistance of this very coterie which is the problem. The need is to spread business opportunities and purchasing power among the common man. Only then people may turn towards breadwinning and distance themselves from jihadi activities. This is not done by carrying the dossier to the White House. □□□